



OREGON BALLET THEATRE'S STUDENT PERFORMANCE SERIES 2017-2018

MAN / WOMAN

April 18, 2018

Show starts at 12:00

Doors open at 11:30

April 19, 2018

Show starts at 12:00

Doors open at 11:30

Newmark Theatre

1111 SW Broadway, Portland, OR 97205

Kasandra Gruener, MA Ed.

Director of Education Outreach





Avery Reiners and Emily Parker | Photo by Christopher Peddecord

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THANK YOU TO OUR FOUNDATION AND GOVERNMENT PARTNERS!



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The following Study Guide is designed to assist educators and students prepare for the upcoming April 18 & 19, 2018 Student Performance Series at the Newmark Theater. The program is entitled *Man/Woman Strength! Beauty!* We are so pleased to bring you this dynamic program. Oregon Ballet Theatre will be presenting four distinct ballets, all of which can be viewed through the lens of inquiry about strength and beauty in women and men. Discussions might include such questions as, "How is beauty and strength expressed by men and women? Does everyone the world over see beauty in the same way? Is there only one kind of strength?"

This Study Guide includes a listing of the program order followed by information about each ballet. There are questions, student activities and internet links to music and historical information. This Study Guide can assist educators to explore the essential questions found in Oregon's Core Art Standards for Dance. The Essential Question in the **Responding** portion of the Standards, Anchor Standards 7 and 8, asks: How can I "read" a dance to interpret meaning? Anchor Standard 9 asks, "How do we evaluate the quality of dance?" **The Connecting/Synthesizing**

portion of the Standards ask, "How does dance relate to and develop personal identity, values and beliefs?" (Anchor Standard 10) and, "How does dance relate to society, culture, history, and other disciplines and areas of study?" (Anchor Standard 11)

There is also a page regarding what to know the day of the show such as transportation, parking and seating.

After the performance, students might consider the four ballets and ask: How do the dancers, women and men, express their beauty and strength? Which ballet was a favorite?

If you could be a dancer in one of these ballets, which would it be?

We look forward to seeing you in the theater!
Kasandra Gruener



Photo by Joni Kabana



The arts are where learning starts, from a child's first exploration of meaning on a page by finger painting to an adult's use of the arts to develop, understand and communicate new ideas."

~ Oregon Department of Education

Would you like to further expand your students' experience with dance? OBT teaching artists go out to local schools and dance with students, linking dance with other academic topics -- like science, math, language arts, or life skills! We bring the "A" to "STEM!" YAY STEAM! We have several types of Dance Residency programs that explore ballet along with other genres of dance -- even hip-hop! Dance is something everyone can do.

WORDS TO KNOW



The following vocabulary words are excerpted from the Glossary for National Core Arts: Dance Standards found in the Oregon Department of Education's Educator Resource page for Academic Content Standards.

Choreographic devices: Manipulation of dance movement, sequences or phrases (repetition, inversion, accumulation, canon, retrograde, call and response)

Dance work: A complete dance that has a beginning, middle (development), and end

Energy: The dynamic quality, force attack, weight, and flow of movement

Genre: A category of dance characterized by similarities in form, style, purpose, or subject matter (for example, ballet, hip hop, modern, ballroom, cultural practices)

Movement vocabulary: Codified or personal movement characteristics that define a movement style

Polyrhythmic: In music, several rhythms layered on top of one another and played simultaneously; in dance, embodying several rhythms simultaneously in different body parts

Production elements: Aspects of performance that produce theatrical

effects (for example, costumes, make up, sound, lighting, props)

See. Think. Wonder: An inquiry-based Visual Thinking Strategy (VTS) used for critical analysis from Harvard Project Zero, in which children respond to simple questions (What do you see? What do you think? What do you wonder?) which enable a child to begin to make meaning from an observed (dance) work of art. For more information on Project Zero, go here: <http://www.pz.harvard.edu/projects/visible-thinking>

Here are two links to Oregon Department of Education resources for the arts:

<http://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/arts/Pages/default.aspx>

<http://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/arts/Documents/nccasconceptualframework4.pdf>



National Coalition for **CORE ARTS** Standards



STRENGTH! BEAUTY!

Oregon Ballet Theatre Principal Dancer Alison Roper and Principal Guest Artist Artur Sultanov in Nicolo Fonte's Left Unsaid. Photo by James McGrew.

Left Unsaid

Choreography: Nicolo Fonte

Music: Johann Sebastian Bach, Partita No. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1004 Allemanda, Sarabanda & excerpt from Ciaccona and Sonata No. 3 in C Major, BWV 1005 Largo & Adagio

Costume Design: Katherine Scoggins

Lighting Design: Michael Mazzola

Rehearsal Assistant: Lisa Kipp

World Premiere: July 25, 2003; Aspen Santa Fe Ballet; The Lensic Performing Arts Center; Santa Fe, New Mexico

OBT Premiere: April 17, 2009; Newmark Theatre; Portland, Oregon

Music from Bach Works; Lara St. John, violin performed courtesy Ancalagon Records and Lara St. John.

The Dying Swan

Choreography: Michel Fokine

Stager: Lisa Sundstrom

Music: Camille Saint-Saëns, The Carnival of the Animals XIII. The Swan

Costume Design: Sandra Woodall

Lighting Design: Michael Mazzola

World Premiere: December 22, 1905; Noblemen's Hall; St. Petersburg, Russia

OBT Premiere: April 12, 2018; Newmark Theatre; Portland, Oregon

Drifted in a Deeper Land

Choreography: James Canfield

Lighting Design: Michael Mazzola

Rehearsal Assistant: Jeffrey Stanton

OBT Premiere: November 2, 1990; Oregon Ballet Theatre; Civic Auditorium; Portland, Oregon

Falling Angels

Dance Production/Choreography: Jiří Kylián

Assistant to the Choreographer: Roslyn Anderson

Music: Steve Reich, Drumming: Part I (1970-1971)

Costume Design: Joke Visser

Stage Concept: Jiří Kylián

Lighting Design: Jiří Kylián (concept), Joop Caboort (realization)

Technical Supervision Light/Set: Joost Biegelaar

Rehearsal Assistant: Jeffrey Stanton

World Premiere: November 23, 1989; Nederlands Dans Theater (NDT I); AT&T Danstheater; The Hague, Netherlands

OBT Premiere: April 12, 2018; Newmark Theatre; Portland, Oregon

Steve Reich, Drumming: Part I by arrangement with Hendon Music, Inc., a Boosey & Hawkes company, publisher and copyright owner.

LEFT UNSAID

OBT first performed Nicolo Fonte's *Left Unsaid* in 2009. It is a work for six dancers (three men and three women) and three folding chairs. It occurs in five movements, or segments, with various groupings of dancers, all dancing in soft-soled ballet slippers to beautiful music by Johann Sebastian Bach. The choreography is physically demanding yet the dancers appear to move effortlessly whether in or out of balance. *Left Unsaid* is not a "story ballet" like *The Nutcracker* or *Cinderella*, instead the choreography, stage set, lighting, and music combine to create an atmospheric mood that allows viewers freedom to determine their own meaning of the work. There are moments when two people dance together, but interestingly, the groupings shift regarding who dances with whom—woman/ man, man/man, or woman/woman—reflecting the way people work together in daily interactions. The chairs used in the ballet are a key element. The place they rest on the stage, the direction they are facing, whether dancers are sitting or standing

on them, all add to the total effect, which seems playful at times. Fonte invented imaginative ways for the dancers to work with the chairs, making the chairs almost like additional dancers on the stage.

Strength! Beauty!

The costumes for this ballet are very simple, yet elegant, and can be seen to highlight the dancers' strength and beauty. The men wear stylized black suits and mesh sleeveless t-shirts, accenting powerful torsos and muscular arms—a common element associated with male beauty and strength. The women wear a blue leotard with design elements that reveal the sculptural beauty of their muscular and expressive back and legs. Depending on culture and time, views vary widely about what is considered "beautiful" and whether that beauty can be publically seen. For example, the extent to which clothing shows a woman's legs remains a debate to this day.



OBT Principal Dancers (foreground) Kathi Martuza and Anne Mueller with (background) Company Artist Brian Simcoe, Principal Guest Artist Soloist Steven Houser in Nicolo Fonte's *Left Unsaid*. Photo by James McGrew.

Make a dance!

Students could choreograph their own three-part dance that includes using a chair. A dance, like a good story, needs to have a beginning, middle and end.



1. Create a way to "sit" on the chair—a frozen shape created while sitting—it can be a weird shape. It's your dance!
2. Move around the chair or moving the chair to another place.
3. For the ending—perhaps repeating the beginning shape with a new twist added or doing something surprisingly different. Practice the dance in a fluid way, moving from one part to the other without stopping. Give the dance a name and perform it for friends.

LEFT UNSAID (continued)

Ideas to think about and discuss:

- The various opinions students have regarding beauty and clothing for men and women.
- How the views of a certain culture and time impact choices of clothing—therefore what is considered beautiful. For instance, in our time women rarely wear a long dress and stockings to swim in as it would seem impractical and possibly unsafe, yet it was commonly done just 100 years ago.
- The various ways that men and women express strength.
- Are the views about strength the same for men and women?
- Have views on strength changed for women and men?



OBT dancers Thomas Baker and Peter Franc. Photo by Yi Yin.

THE CHOREOGRAPHER

Nicolo Fonte



Photo by Jana Cruder

Nicolo Fonte retired from his stage career in 2000 to concentrate on a career as a choreographer. Since that time he has created over 40 new works for dance companies that hail from Sweden to Australia. Oregon Ballet Theatre is lucky to have Mr. Fonte as its Resident Choreographer. Born in Brooklyn, New York, Mr. Fonte started dancing at the age of 14. He studied at the Joffrey Ballet School in New York as well as at the San Francisco Ballet and New York City Ballet Schools while completing a Bachelor Degree of Fine Arts at SUNY Purchase. He danced the bulk of his career with Nacho Duato's Compañía Nacional de Danza in Madrid and forged a strong identity in the Spanish company for both his dancing and his choreography.

Learn more at: nicolofonte.com

LEFT UNSAID (continued)

Ideas to think about and discuss:

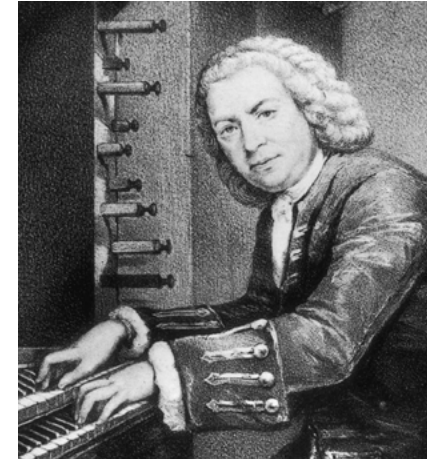
A professional dancer's job is physically challenging. Often dancers begin their professional career as early as their late teens, some dancing into their late 30's. Some dancers stop performing due to injury. Some leave the stage to become dance teachers or choose to stop dancing altogether and attend schools in related careers such as physical therapy. But a select few, like Mr. Fonte, find that they have interest and talent for choreography, and set out to make dances. This process of changing-careers-within-careers is similar to baseball, where a person may start out as a first baseman, move on to coaching, and possibly end up managing a team.

Discuss the idea of choosing a career path and all the possible types of work that one could do in that path.



Composer: Johann Sebastian Bach

Though J.S. Bach (1685 – 1750) is now considered among the greatest composers in history, and admired as the creator of works that defined the highest accomplishment of the Baroque era of music, he was better known as an organist and violinist during his lifetime. The music for *Left Unsaid* epitomizes virtuosity for the violin. Bach scholar Cristoph Wolfe wrote that the Partitas “demonstrate Bach’s command of performing techniques, but also his ability to bring into play, without even an accompanying bass part, dense counterpoint and refined harmony with distinctive and well-articulated rhythmic designs, especially in the dance movements.”



Johann Sebastian Bach

Partita No. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1004

Listen to the music from *Left Unsaid*

<https://youtu.be/6kaYzgoHjc>

Find a time to sit and listen to any of Bach's music. Try listening to the music with all of your concentration, doing nothing else, but sitting and listening. If that is too hard at first, try doing something quiet while listening, like drawing. Of course, if you feel like dancing—go ahead!

THE DYING SWAN



Anna Pavlova in Michel Fokine's solo *The Dying Swan*, 1905, postcard from a photograph by Schneider, Berlin, Germany, about 1909

Some people new to the art of ballet wonder if *The Dying Swan* has something to do with the famous ballet *Swan Lake*. The two works are not connected. *Swan Lake* is a full-length story ballet performed by many dancers to music by Pytor Ilyich Tchaikovsky. *The Dying Swan* is a work for a single female ballerina set to a piece of music from *The Carnival of the Animals* composed by Camille Saint-Saëns. The iconic four-minute ballet, originally just called *The Swan*, was choreographed by Michel Fokine in 1905 for the famous ballerina Anna Pavlova. He was inspired in part by Alfred Tennyson's poem, *The Dying Swan*. Ms. Pavlova performed the ballet more than 4,000 times as she toured the world, attracting

countless new audiences to ballet. Interestingly, her interpretation of a swan—undulating arms outstretched like wings floating above feet and legs moving as if rippling water—has influenced generations of ballerinas who dance as swans in *Swan Lake*.

Strength! Beauty!

The Dying Swan epitomizes the ethereal beauty and delicacy of the Romantic era ballerina. While she is depicted as delicate and fragile, she is in fact extremely strong. For much of the ballet the ballerina moves across the stage in complete control *en pointe* (a French term for being elevated onto the tips of the toes) doing a traveling step called *bourée* (a French term for a rapid series of tiny steps).



Try walking forward, backward, and sideways on the balls of your feet with heels held highly away from the floor (dancers call this walking on *demi-pointe*—or half-point). See if you can do this for 4 minutes!

Staging of The Dying Swan

Clearly it has been a long time since Mr. Fokine created *The Dying Swan*. Photos can't give enough information to recreate the ballet, and film versions of it are rare. So how has the ballet managed to be preserved? It has been passed down from dancer to dancer, much like a family's secret recipe, or the teachings of a great thinker. OBT is lucky to have Lisa Sundstrom, the program director of OBT2, OBT's junior company, teach the ballet to our dancers. As a ballerina with Pennsylvania Ballet she performed

The Dying Swan in the United States and throughout China during an international tour. When she learned the ballet, she was encouraged by her mentor to bring her personal touch to the interpretation. So, she emphasizes that while the ballet is "set," each ballerina that she teaches the dance to must give something of their own interpretation to the role.



"It is useless to dabble in beauty. One must be utterly devoted to beauty, with every nerve of the body."

~ Anna Pavlova

THE DYING SWAN (continued)



Prima ballerina assoluta Yvette Chauviré, who lived to be 99 years old was captured in a film transmitting her knowledge of *The Dying Swan* to another ballerina. In this film we can see that beauty is not for the young alone.

Choreographer: Michel Fokine



Mikhail Fokine. © & courtesy of Isabelle Fokine and Fokine Estate Archive

The Fokine Estate Archive states that Mr. Fokine “could be described as a renaissance man. Along with being one of the finest dancers of his generation, he was an accomplished painter, musician, philosopher, and intellectual. It was with this background that he set about creating a revolution in dance.” In 1904, one year before the debut of *The Dying Swan*, Fokine sent his revolutionary views to Russia’s Imperial Theater Directors. Among other things, he asserted that, “The great, the outstanding, feature of the new ballet is that in place of acrobatic tricks designed to attract applause, and formal entrances and pauses made solely for effect, there shall be but one thing-the aspiration for beauty.... The dance bears the same relation to gesture that poetry bears to prose. Dancing

is poetry of motion.” In 1914 The London Times published Fokine’s Five Principles which was a set of guidelines that set about to modernize the art of ballet. Mr. Fokine created over 80 ballets around the world in his lifetime and in 1940 was a founding member of American Ballet Theater.

Composer: Camille Saint-Saëns

The Carnival of the Animals, composed in 1886, was originally written as a kind of a joke by Mr. Saint-Saëns. He worried that it might damage his reputation, so he banned complete performances of it. He allowed only one movement, *The Swan*, to be published while he was alive. It became acclaimed worldwide as *The Dying Swan* after 1905 when it was choreographed for legendary ballerina Anna Pavlova.



Listen to a strong yet tender version of *The Swan* as performed by Sheku Kanneh-Mason, a British cellist who won the 2016 BBC Young Musician of the Year award. He was the first black musician to win the award since its launch 38 years earlier.



Postage stamp commemorating Camille Saint-Saëns

The Dying Swan (stanza 1)

The plain was grassy, wild and bare,
Wide, wild, and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere
An under-roof of doleful gray.
With an inner voice the river ran,
Adown it floated a dying swan,
And loudly did lament.
It was the middle of the day.
Ever the weary wind went on,
And took the reed-tops as it went.

~Alfred Lord Tennyson

DRIFTED IN A DEEPER LAND

Drifted in a Deeper Land was choreographed for OBT in 1990 by OBT Founding Artistic Director James Canfield. Created during the rising toll of the AIDS crisis, the subdued and introspective ballet features seven men moving through space in elegant patterns against the backdrop of a dark stage. Students who study composition will notice that the choreography employs unison, cannon, duets and solos. The men wear a simple costume—shirtless torso with legs covered in light colored tights. The lighting, created by Michael Mazzola, coupled with the choreography of still poses, varied facings, and traveling steps evoke a sense of quiet timelessness. It is as if these dancers could be animated sculptures from the past as well as the present. It was originally set to Ray Lynch's *Drifted in a Deeper Land*, but for the current revival Mr. Canfield chose to have the dancers perform the seven and a half minute work in silence.



Roman bronze sculpture, often titled *Victorious Youth*



The Thinker, Auguste Rodin,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art about 1909

Strength! Beauty!

Male beauty, struggle, and physical strength have been immortalized in sculpture through time and across the nations. In this ballet, the dancers repeat movements and hold poses that give space for the viewer to think and wonder, "What does it mean to be a strong man?"



Students might look at images in books, the internet or a museum to observe artists renditions of male beauty and strength.

When Mr. Canfield created this ballet, he exhibited another expression of strength—emotional strength—during a time of turmoil as people were becoming ill and dying in great numbers from a disease that had yet to be adequately understood. The ballet expresses strength through contemplation.

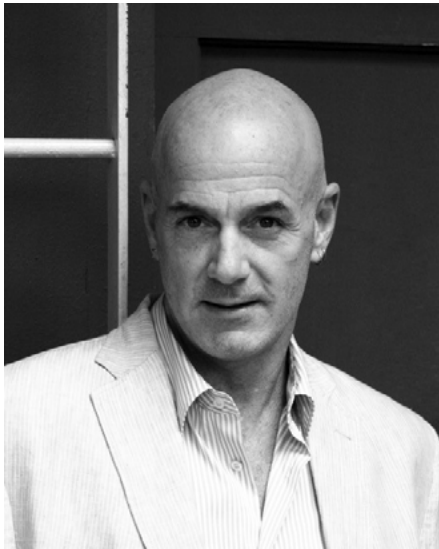


Artists provide our community with ways to process and come to terms with difficult issues. Students might discuss how art can be helpful in challenging times.

HIV/AIDS is a global pandemic. As of 2016, approximately 36.7 million people were living with HIV globally. Since the first AIDS cases were reported in the United States in June 1981, the number of cases and deaths among persons with AIDS increased rapidly during the 1980s followed by substantial declines in new cases and deaths in the late 1990s. In 2016, approximately half were men and half were women. There were about 1.0 million deaths from AIDS in 2016, down from 1.9 million in 2005. There are many up to date sources on the internet for students to explore the instance, rise, and battle against this terrible disease, including the [United Nations](#) and U.S. government's [Center For Disease Control \(CDC\)](#).

DRIFTED IN A DEEPER LAND (continued)

Choreographer: James Canfield



James Canfield

James Canfield, founding artistic director of Oregon Ballet Theatre (1989-2003) and former artistic director of Nevada Ballet Theatre (NBT) and was born in Corning, New York and received his early dance training at the acclaimed Washington School of Ballet under the direction of Mary Day. During his career with The Joffrey Ballet and Washington Ballet, Mr. Canfield danced an extensive repertoire of works by noted choreographers such as Sir Frederick Ashton, Anthony Tudor, George Balanchine, Gerald Arpino, Robert Joffrey, William Forsythe, John Cranko, Marius Petipa, Jiří

Kylián, José Limón, Agnes de Mille, Choo San Goh, and Val Caniparoli among others.

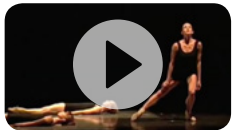
Mr. Canfield created many works for Oregon Ballet Theatre while serving as the artistic director. OBT performed Mr. Canfield's *Romeo & Juliet* in 2016.



James Canfield returns to OBT studios for rehearsal of his work, *Drifted in a Deeper Land*, one of five ballets presented in Oregon Ballet Theatre's MAN/WOMAN, April 12 - 24, 2018 at the Newmark Theatre. Photo by Yi Yin.

FALLING ANGELS

Jiří Kylián created *Falling Angels* as one of the five pieces that together make up his work *Black and White*. *Falling Angels* explores the female dancer's drive for perfection. Steve Reich's percussive score drives the dancers' increasingly extreme and even frantic movements as they work with the contradicting elements of discipline and freedom. This mesmerizing and occasionally humorous ballet demands intense athleticism from the eight women who make up its all-female cast.



Watch a 56 second excerpt of *Falling Angels* performed by Houston Ballet.



OBT dancers rehearsing Jiří Kylián's *Falling Angels*, one of five ballets presented in Oregon Ballet Theatre's MAN/WOMAN, April 12 - 24, 2018 at the Newmark Theatre. Photo by Yi Yin.

Strength! Beauty!

The movement that the women perform in *Falling Angels* is extremely forceful and very precise. It includes pedestrian movement (running, walking, shadow boxing) as well as classical ballet. Not only do the women need to be highly skilled physically in order to generate the steps, they must stay intently focused on the music—counting rhythmic patterns in their heads. It is especially important that they know their own pattern. If a dancer gets lost, she could be further confused if she looks to copy another dancer. The choreography is repetitive and filled with compositional devices such as cannon. It is imperative that each dancer keep to her set pattern. In this sense the women show both mental and physical strength in their stamina to complete the challenge of this ballet. The choreography includes gestures that are often associated with women, such as blowing kisses, struggling with clothing, or framing their faces with hands as if looking in a mirror. But these gestures are often executed in a juxtaposed rapid sequence. The speed of the movement and the abundance of movement ideas might seem chaotic or remind us that women do many things at the same time, either by themselves or with others.



After the ballet students might try to create one or several of the shapes or movements they saw. For a further challenge, students can create their own repetitive pattern, trying to see how fast they can do it.

Students might think of as many gestures as possible that are usually categorized as belonging to a woman or a man. What happens if a woman does a gesture that is usually associated with a man, and vice versa?

FALLING ANGELS (continued)

Choreographer: Jiří Kylián

Mr. Kylián was born in Czechoslovakia in 1947. He started dance at the age of nine and by the time he was 20 years old he had received a scholarship to the Royal Ballet School in London. His artistic career is strongly associated with Nederlands Dans Theater, where he served as artistic director and choreographer. To date he has created over 100 works of dance and film. His ballets are performed all over the world. This is the first ballet by Mr. Kylián to join OBT's repertory.

[Read more about Jiří Kylián: jirikylian.com/existence/](http://jirikylian.com/existence/)



Jiří Kylián 2013 recipient of the Antonín Dvořák Prize

FALLING ANGELS (continued)

Composer: Steve Reich

During the summer of 1970, with the help of a grant from the Institute for International Education, Mr. Reich studied drumming at the Institute for African Studies at the University of Ghana in Accra. Even though a bout of malaria caused him to leave the country sooner than he had intended, he came away inspired by the polyrhythmic playing of the master drummers. Mr. Reich composed *Drumming* in 1970-71 as a work in four movements. *Falling Angels* uses only Part I which is performed on four pairs of tuned bongos. The eight small drums are set up in a line with four percussionists facing each other, two to a side. OBT will be using a recording that includes Mr. Reich as a percussionist.



<https://youtu.be/doJk4yPwJDk>



Charles, Prince of Wales awarding Steve Reich Honorary Doctorate at the Royal College of Music in London.

The New York Times recently called Pulitzer Prize winner Steve Reich, "our greatest living composer."

[Learn more at: stevereich.com](https://www.steverreich.com)

WHAT TO KNOW ON THE DAY OF THE SHOW!!

The Newmark Theater is located at:

1111 SW Broadway,
Portland, OR 97205



The doors to the Newmark Theater will open one half hour before the show begins. Please plan to arrive early so that you can settle in. The dancers may still be warming up onstage—a real treat to see.

If traveling on a school bus, please follow directions for parking from the parking attendants. If driving a personal vehicle, give time to find parking. There is a lot going on downtown at this time. Public transportation is close by.

There are no tickets to this show—the usher has your registration information. Upon entering the building, please tell the main lobby usher your group's school name so that you can hear which level you will be seated in. Homeschools should also know the organizers name as well. When you arrive at the Aisle Door into the house, the usher will direct you to your seat. Please leave backpacks behind—if you must bring them the ushers will ask that they be left in the lobby of your seating level. You will be asked to secure your seat before visiting restrooms.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHY DO THE GUYS WEAR TIGHTS?

Almost every activity requires a special uniform of some kind. Just as football players, wrestlers, and baseball players wear stretchy material to help them move with flexibility and speed, ballet dancers often wear stretchy tights so they are able to leap, kick, and stretch as they dance. Another reason tights are worn is so the audience can see the incredible leg muscles that allow them to jump so high.

HOW DO THE BALLET DANCERS STAND ON THEIR TOES?

Female ballet dancers wear special shoes called "pointe shoes" to help them achieve dancing on the tips of their toes. Pointe shoes are hard at the ends, and are handmade with layers of satin, glue and leather. Dancers must take several years of ballet lessons before they are allowed to wear pointe shoes. With hard work and good training to develop strong ankles and feet, most young ballet students begin working en pointe at age 11 or 12.

THIS BALLET HAS NO PLOT! OR DOES IT?

Some do, and some don't. Ballets with plots like Romeo & Juliet, The Nutcracker, or Swan Lake are called story ballets. There are also abstract ballets, with a focus on movement instead of a specific story. Abstract ballets are meant to evoke ideas or emotions, and the audience can interpret them many different ways.

HOW OLD ARE THE DANCERS?

Oregon Ballet Theatre's professional company members range in age from 18 to 39, but most are in their early-to-mid-20s. All of the dancers began studying ballet when they were children, as it takes many years of dedication to become a professional ballet dancer.

HOW OFTEN DO THEY PRACTICE?

Ballet dancers take class every morning for 1.5 hours, and then they rehearse all day. They have Sundays and sometimes Saturdays off, and they have a lunch break. Dancing is their full-time job.

WHERE ARE THE DANCERS FROM?

Oregon Ballet Theatre dancers come from all around the world: Japan, China, and different areas within the United States. There are dancers from California, Washington, New Jersey, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, New York, and several who grew up right here in Oregon.

APPLAUSE

DO clap after a really spectacular movement. Laugh if the situation onstage is funny. Applaud and say "Bravo!" at the end.

DON'T boo, whistle, hiss or make noise during the performance. It is distracting and disrespectful of the performers and to your neighbors in the audience.

FOOD

DO eat before you get to the theater if you think you might get hungry before the performance is over.

DON'T bring food or gum into the seating area. It makes noise, trash, and distractions.

TALKING

DO wait. Make a note on your program or a piece of paper if you want to remember something. Tell your friend after the ballet is over.

DON'T whisper or discuss things with other people during the performance. Your friends may want to listen to the music or pay attention to the dancers' movement or the story.

DRESS & BACKPACKS

DO dress neatly as a sign of respect to the artists and the theater.

DON'T wear over-powering perfume, big hats, or jingly bracelets. Leave backpacks at school. If you must bring one, you'll be asked to leave it in the lobby.

CELL PHONES, CAMERAS, IPODS, MP3 PLAYERS, ETC.

DO relax when the lights in the house (seating area) get dark. Sit back and enjoy the live performance with your eyes, ears, and imagination.

DON'T use cell phones and other electronic devices in the theater. The noise and clicking can be distracting to your neighbors, and camera flashes can be dangerous to the dancers.